

Governor's School Health Award/Passport to Healthy Living Highlands Elementary School

PROBLEM OVERVIEW

One of the problems we faced when first starting our Healthy Kids Committee, which is the name given to our School Health Advisory Council, is what should we do? With that we also had to determine what was important. Since we have over 50 percent free and reduced lunches we needed to make our activities affordable and reach families by also reaching the parents. We needed to find a starting place. We needed to involve not only our students, but their parents. We also needed to make our activities available to our whole student population.

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The Appleton School District sponsors an Education for Healthy Kids Institute every summer. That was our starting place. At that first institute we started to forge a plan out of nothing using information received at the institute and by talking to other schools also attending the institute. Grant money was available to help us get started. After that first school year we evaluated what worked and what didn't. Here we built off our successes. We still did not have a solid direction; however, each year we continued that cycle—developing and refining our plan.

Enter the Governor's School Health Award. Two schools in our district won the award the first year. We collaborated with them to find out what was needed only to find out we had a lot in place. So we applied and our school qualified for the bronze award. That was the beginning of our progress to develop a healthier school. I say this because the Governor's School Health Award committee gave us their input about where we needed to improve. Each year we looked at that information and found a few items we could work on. The Governor's School Health Award has been a wonderful blueprint which has allowed us to work toward achieving a healthier atmosphere for our students, staff, and families. The best thing about this award is the financial supports we have received from the Governor's School Health Award, which has been instrumental in helping us achieve our goals.

This year has been more successful than ever. We finished last year with Movin' and Munchin' Schools and an Olympic Day event. The Olympic Day event was a traditional, yearly event held the last week of school on a track painted in our field. Due to budgets becoming tighter, we would have had to cancel that event for the last two years. However, due to the money received from the Governor's School Health Award, we were able to purchase our own power field painter. Even though the district was no longer able to support this event, we still were able to have it. Now I come in on a weekend and paint a 200 meter oval track for the event. I paint it three weeks early and keep it painted. Our students show up at school on Monday to see this track. They immediately create their own races, running and laughing as they sprint around the track. This goes on daily until the end of the school year. If it were not for the Governor's School Health Award, this event and activity would not be available to our students. This event is a favorite and creates a wonderful end to a school year. Because of our grant money, this event is available to all students of all economic standing.

We again participated in the Fox Cities Marathon Festival of Races. This event is cost prohibitive to some of our families. To compensate for this, we hold our own event the week after the Fox Cities Event. We call it our Fall Family Activity Night. This is also a free event which allows all families to participate as well as partake in some healthy snacks after the event, which again is made possible by award money.

Movin' and Munchin' Schools is another program we piloted last spring. This event is sponsored by the Department of Public Instruction, which supplies the blue print. If successful enough, more money can be

received through the program. However, with the grant money and award money we already get, we are able to provide incentives for students achieving their goals. We also partnership with various businesses and organizations such as the YMCA, Happy Joes Pizza, Badger Sports Complex, and others, which allow us to purchase other incentive rewards for our students.

One of our biggest success stories sprouted out of our PTA's Muffins for Moms and Donuts for Dads activity. Every year to honor our parents, our PTA sponsored a breakfast where they supplied donuts and muffins for the parents. This year our committee partner shipped with them. We purchased fruits, vegetables and juices that were also served at the event. This allowed us to touch families and show there were alternatives to unhealthy foods. It was well received and this partnership will continue.

As seen in our action plan, we have continued with the successes and have a lot of other activities going on. We hope our school will become a hub where families will learn about the benefits of making healthy choices.

Without the blueprint of our past applications from the Governor's School Health Award and the money received from the award, we would not be able to offer the programming we are able to offer to our families.

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